



## NEWS RELEASE

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May 6, 2019

## Pair Charged with Immigration Fraud Targeting Chinese Nationals

Two people have been charged with taking \$1.5 million from Chinese nationals in an immigration fraud scheme, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced today.

Nianfei Bu, aka Allen Bu, (dob 12/15/84) of West Covina faces 12 counts of grand theft, eight of which were for taking more than \$950 by fraud and four of which were for wage theft valued at more than \$950. Hourong Zhang, aka Joanna Zhang, (dob 2/21/82) of Rowland Heights is charged with eight counts of grand theft of more than \$950 by fraud.

The charges include an allegation of fraud and embezzlement resulting in the loss of more than \$500,000.

The defendants are expected to be arraigned today in Department 30 of the Foltz Criminal Justice Center. Case BA477338 was filed on May 1 for arrest warrant and the pair were arrested on May 2.

From November 2015 to March 2016, Bu and Zhang are accused of promising seven Chinese nationals that they could secure visas for them if they invested in one of five restaurants owned by Bu, Deputy District Attorney Duke Chau of the Consumer Protection Division's Notario Fraud Unit said. The defendants, who had been in a relationship, were not attorneys or registered immigration consultants and allegedly provided neither legal or immigration services to the victims as promised.

Bu also is accused of not paying wages in an amount totaling \$11,000 owed to employees who he had hired to help contact potential investors. These employees weren't aware of the illegal nature of the operation, the prosecutor said.

Bu faces a possible maximum sentence of 14 years and eight months to be served in county jail and state prison if convicted as charged. Zhang faces up to 12 years in jail and prison.

The case remains under investigation by the District Attorney's Office, Bureau of Investigation, with assistance from the California Department of Industrial Relations.

Anyone who believes they may have been a victim is encouraged to call the Notario Fraud Unit at 213-257-2465.

### **About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office**

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.